

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 COME-00 /091 W

-----023235 212050Z /46

O R 211955Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8151

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3613

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SF RH WA

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN BOTHA ON GENERAL OUTLOOK
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. SUMMARY: BOTHA SPENT MOST OF AN HOUR-LONG MEETING
PAINTING A GRIM PICTURE OF DETERIORATING SITUATIONS IN
RHODESIA, NAMIBIA, AND SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. HE BLAMED
HMG AND USG FOR FAILING TO TAKE FIRM STAND WITH RHODESIAN
AND NAMIBIAN BLACK NATIONALISTS IN ORDER TO FORCE AGREE-
MENTS. FACT THAT HE SAW BRITISH AMBASSADOR IMMEDIATELY
AFTER MY MEETING AND GAVE HIM ROUGHLY THE SAME PITCH
SUGGESTS THAT HE HAD WANTED TO CONVEY MESSAGE AS INPUT INTO
OWEN-VANCE TALKS THIS WEEKEND. END SUMMARY.

2. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA AT 10 A.M.
THIS MORNING IN ORDER TO PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE
FIVE THE MODIFICATION OF THE FINAL SENTENCE OF
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PARA 6(B) OF THE TALKING POINTS. MEETING LASTED ONE
HOUR. FIRST 15 MINUTES WERE TAKEN UP WITH TALKING
POINTS ISSUE AND IS BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY.

3. BOTHA THEN PROCEEDED TO GIVE LONG AND RATHER
APOCALYPTIC RESUME OF SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.
HE EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER THE GENERAL DETERIORATION

OF SITUATION IN RHODESIA. HE FORESAW A SITUATION BEYOND SOLUTION BY PEACEFUL MEANS IF A PROMPT SETTLEMENT COULD NOT BE REACHED. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE LACK OF BRITISH WILL AND ABILITY TO EXERCISE ITS CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN RHODESIA. HE RECITED THE NOW FAMILIAR LINE THAT THE WEST DOES NOTHING TO RESTRAIN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WHILE DEMANDING GREATER CONCESSIONS FROM SMITH. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE BLAMED THE BRITISH FOR CHANGING PROPOSALS PREVIOUSLY ADVANCED AFTER GIVING ASSURANCES THAT THOSE PROPOSALS WOULD BE THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT. I NOTED THAT I WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY RENEGING BY THE BRITISH ON THEIR COMMITMENTS. AS HONEST BROKERS TRYING TO WORK OUT A SETTLEMENT, THEY NECESSARILY HAD TO CONSULT ALL SIDES ON A RANGE OF IDEAS IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A FORMULA THAT COULD BRING ABOUT AN AGREEMENT.

4. BOTHA THEN SWITCHED TO THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING THE BLACK LEADER WHO COMMANDS MAJORITY SUPPORT IN RHODESIA SO THAT NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE CARRIED OUT WITH HIM. OTHERWISE, HE MAINTAINED, IT WAS A FUTILE EXERCISE TRYING TO OBTAIN CONSENSUS WITH PEOPLE LIKE MUGABE AND NKOMO. HE SPOKE IN TERMS OF AN IMPARTIAL REFERENDUM AMONG BLACKS, NOTING THAT THE WHITES WOULD BE HAVING THEIR ELECTION AT THE END OF AUGUST AND THE BLACKS NEED A SIMILAR TEST. I RESPONDED THAT BEFORE THE GRAHAM-LOW

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TEAM HAD RUN INTO SUCH HEAVY WEATHER IN LUSAKA AND SALISBURY, THE INTENT OF THE NEGOTIATORS WAS TO COME UP WITH PROPOSALS FOR A CONSTITUTION THAT COULD LEAD TO AN ELECTION THAT WOULD SETTLE THIS ISSUED. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH AN APPROACH AIMED AT BRINGING ALL THOSE CONCERNED INTO AN ELECTION PROCESS THAT WOULD BE OPEN AND FAIR, I DID NOT SEE HOW AN IMPARTIAL TEST OF PUBLIC OPINION COULD BE CARRIED OUT. I STRESSED THAT SMITH COULD HAVE HELPED HIS OWN CAUSE BY COOPERATING WITH THE NEGOTIATING TEAM. THIS COULD HAVE BEEN A MAJOR STEP IN GETTING THE BLACK NATIONALIST LEADERS TO DEFINE THEIR POSITION ON A CONSTITUTION AND THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. BOTHA NOTED THAT HE HAD FLOWN TO SALISBURY YESTERDAY TO MAKE SURE THAT SMITH UNDERSTOOD THAT SOUTH AFRICA WANTED RHODESIA TO CONTINUE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

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5. BOTH A ALSO EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT LONDON AND WASHINGTON REALLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. BEING OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE REALITIES, THEY UNDERESTIMATED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DETERIORATION WHICH HAS SET IN. THIS APPLIED NOT ONLY TO RHODESIA BUT ALSO TO NAMIBIA AND THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. RHODESIA'S DISSENSION AMONG WHITES IS A BAD SIGN ALTHOUGH HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT SMITH WOULD BE ABLE TO RE-ESTABLISH UNCHALLENGED LEADERSHIP IN THE ELECTIONS. HE ALSO FEARED THAT BLACKS (SHONAS AND MATABELES) WOULD BEGIN FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES INSIDE RHODESIA. ON NAMIBIA HE EXPRESSED DEEPEST PESSIMISM THAT THE CONTACT GROUP WOULD BE ABLE TO BRING SWAPO AND THE UN TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSALS WHICH HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN CAPE TOWN. AS FAR AS SOUTH AFRICA IS CONCERNED, HE SAID THAT US AND GREAT BRITAIN WERE ACTUALLY WORKING TO MAKE THINGS MORE DIFFICULT. HE REFERRED TO DAVID OWEN SEEKING EEC SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC RESTRICTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA WHICH FORTUNATELY ITALY, FRANCE AND GERMANY
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WERE RESISTING. "YOU PEOPLE," HE SAID REFERRING TO THE US, "ACCORDING TO OUR INTELLIGENCE SOURCES ARE PREPARING MEASURES AGAINST US." FROM ALL THIS HE CONCLUDED THAT "THINGS ARE APPROACHING THE BREAKING POINT."
I RESPONDED THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHAT HIS SOURCES

WERE FOR MAKING THESE ASSERTIONS BUT HOPED THAT IT WAS NOT THE CITIZEN ARTICLES. I COULD NOT COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN THE EEC SINCE I WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THAT ORGANIZATION. WITH RESPECT TO THE US, I SAID THAT WE WERE STILL HOPEFUL THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD SEE ITS WAY CLEAR TO INITIATE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE, AS VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE HAD INDICATED IN VIENNA, SO THAT OUR RELATIONS WOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

6. AT THIS JUNCTURE WE DISCONTINUED THE DISCUSSION BECAUSE HE WAS ALREADY LATE FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR. SUBSEQUENTLY I CONFERRED WITH SIR DAVID SCOTT WHO TOLD ME THAT HE SPENT AN HOUR AND 20 MINUTES WITH BOTHA DISCUSSING THE RHODESIAN SITUATION. FROM SIR DAVID'S DESCRIPTION, BOTHA COVERED MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND BUT WENT INTO CONSIDERABLY MORE DETAIL REGARDING HIS VISIT TO SALISBURY YESTERDAY AND VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT.

7. COMMENT: THE CONSECUTIVE MEETINGS WITH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR AND ME AND THE GLOOMY PORTRAYAL OF EVENTS SUGGEST THAT BOTHA WANTED TO CONVEY TO LONDON AND WASHINGTON THE SAG'S SERIOUS CONCERN OVER THE OUTLOOK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE UNDOUBTEDLY HAD THE TALKS TO BE HELD THIS WEEKEND BETWEEN FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN AND SECRETARY VANCE IN MIND. WHILE SOME OF THE CONCERN IS SELF-SERVING, THERE IS A GROWING PREOCCUPATION HERE OVER FAILURE TO MAKE ANY PROGRESS IN THE RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA SETTLEMENTS, THE
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CONTINUING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AT HOME, AND THE PERCEIVED THREAT OF MOUNTING PRESSURES FROM THE WEST. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN ATTITUDE WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE MESSAGE.
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Message Attributes

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Enclosure: n/a
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Office: ACTION AF
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1790147
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN BOTHA ON GENERAL OUTLOOK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, SF, RH, WA, (BOTHA, PIK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2dddea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009